

Emergency Awareness/Preparedness Survey – Summer 2008

Background:

The purpose of the survey was to begin assessing progress toward a performance measure assigned to the Virginia Department of Emergency Management:

**Increase the percentage of individuals who demonstrate awareness
of threats to Virginia and their personal readiness to react appropriately.**

Methodology:

The performance measure was separated into two areas for testing:

1. the public's awareness of threats
2. the public's readiness to react to emergencies

These areas were tested through an informal on-line and written survey available statewide. The survey was created in-house. Written copies were distributed to several state agencies and local governments to make available to the general public. Demographic information including gender, marital status, age and race was collected.

We collected a total of 483 surveys from June 11 through August 2008: 248 online and 235 written. From that total, we voided 41 surveys because they were incomplete or missing answers.

Total tabulated surveys are 442: 248 online and 194 written. Only the written surveys had a geographic breakdown:

North	32
West	43
Center	36
East	54
South	29
Total:	194

Results:

Question 1

187 people (43.1%) said that they are likely to experience a public health emergency

183 people (42.5%) said that they are likely to experience a tornado

158 people (36.3%) said that they are likely to experience flooding

Question 2

400 people (90.5%) have thought about the types of emergencies that could occur where they live.

Question 3

The actions people have taken towards emergency preparedness:

214 people (48.7%) collected information

201 people (45.8%) discussed emergency plans w/ family

191 people (43.5%) prepared emergency kit

Question 4

The information source they would use most during an emergency was tied between local radio (377 people or 85.3%) and TV news (377 people or 85.3%).

Question 5

49.5% or 219 people stated they do have an emergency supply kit and 49.3% said they do not have one.

Question 6

From the people that said they do not own an emergency kit (218 people),

215 or 93.4% said they have a manual can opener

216 or 70.4% said they own a battery powered radio

213 or 77.0% have proper identification for family members

In addition, from the same group

212 or 65.6% said they do not have extra cash on hand

211 or 74.4% do not have a whistle to signal for help

214 or 70.1% do not own a dust mask to filter air

Question 7

We wanted to know if people have certain supplies in their homes to last their families for three days in case of emergency.

370 respondents (86.2%) said they have canned/non-perishable food

220 respondents (51.6%) have three gallons of water per person

251 people (79.4%) have pet food if they had a pet at home.

380 people (92.0%) have prescription medicines

Question 8

We wanted to know if families have an emergency contact.

49.9% said they have identified an out of town family member or friend as emergency contact in the case of separation

48.3% said they do not have an emergency contact.

Question 9

The top five sources of information that people would use in order to learn more about emergency preparedness are:

Newspapers	57.7%
Weather radio	50.3%
City or county Web site	48.7%
Ready Virginia Web site	46.2%
Fliers and brochures	42.1%

Online vs. written surveys:

Question 1

Online responders considered a public health emergency as their primary threat; written survey takers said tornadoes are their main threat.

Question 2

A higher percentage of online surveys (93.1%) show awareness of natural disasters and emergencies as opposed to 87.1% who took the written survey.

A higher percentage of those who took the written survey (12.4) said they have not thought about the types of emergencies that could affect them versus 6.0% of online responders.

Question 3

The online responders have taken more actions towards preparing for emergencies than those who completed the written surveys.

55.6% online responders have collected information vs. 39.8% in written surveys
 54.0% online responders have discussed actions with family vs. 35.1% in written surveys
 53.6% online responders said to have an emergency kit vs. 30.4% in written surveys
 16.1% online responders had taken no steps to prepare vs. 26.7% in written surveys

Question 4

We see the same pattern of preference in online and written surveys about seeking information in case of emergency, with radio and TV being in first and second places respectively.

Question 5

A majority (57.3%) of online responders said they have an emergency kit at home vs. 39.7% in written surveys.
 A higher percentage (59.3%) of those who took the written survey said they do not have an emergency supply kit, compared to 41.5% of online responders.

Question 8

A majority of online responders (55.8%) said they have identified an out-of-town emergency contact vs. 42.5% in written surveys.

Question 9

The primary source of information people would use to learn more about preparing for emergencies were 67.9% newspapers from written survey takers and 56.6% Ready Virginia Web site from online responders.

Second preferred source of information was 54.4% radio from written survey takers and 55.8% city or county Web site from online responders.

Third source was home improvement stores (32.1%) for those taking the written survey and newspapers (49.6%) for online responders.

Question 10

No significant difference is seen in percentage of males and females taking the online and written surveys.

Question 11

Married people were represented in both the online and written survey in similar percentages.

Question 12

The majority of online responders are in the age group of 50 to 59; the majority of those who took the written survey are in the 40 to 49 age group.

Question 13

Even though there is a clear majority of white/non-Hispanic people represented in both written and online surveys, it is noticeable that African Americans and Hispanics are represented in higher percentages in the written survey than the online version. Asian American responders are higher in the online version.

Overall demographics:

Question 10

Females	55.6%
Males	44.4%
Skipped Question	7 people

Question 11

Single	34.5%
Married	65.5%
Skipped Question	7 people

People with children

61.8% stated they have children.

Question 12

Age groups

Under 20	0.7%
20 to 29	8.3%
30 to 39	17.0%
40 to 49	26.0%
50 to 59	29.7%
60 and older	18.4%

Question 13

Race Groups

White/non Hispanic	80.5%
African American	11.5%
Native American	0.5%
Asian American	1.6%
Hispanic/Latino	2.3%
Other	3.7%

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